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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
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RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 6348  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 4152  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2739  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7338  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1361  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4717  
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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND  
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, DBENZE AND AFERNANDEZ,  
IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER  
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Arms Smuggling  
Accusations/Lebanon, Peace Process, Iraq, Palestinian Territories  
(11/2)

11. Summary: Syrian newspapers today reacted to statements by Terje  
Roed-Larsen, the UN Secretary General's envoy to Lebanon, and John

Bolton, US Ambassador to the United Nations, saying that weapons  
continue to be smuggled to Lebanon from Syria.

Papers featured a statement on Wednesday by Lebanese PM Fuad  
Al-Siniora denying that the Lebanese government has informed Terje  
Road Larsen of weapon smuggling taking place on the border with  
Syria.

Papers also cited a statement by Lebanese FM Fawzi Salloukh denying  
the statement in Larsen's report that the Lebanese government  
informed him about weapons smuggling to Lebanon from Syria.  
Salloukh said that "no weapons cargo may escape capture and these  
are facts confirmed by the leadership of the Lebanese army."

A third statement on the same topic was issued by a Lebanese  
military source, categorically denying that any weapons had been  
smuggled across the Syrian border since the Lebanese army assumed  
the mission of controlling the borders.

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"Hilary Clinton calls for dialogue with Syria and Iran in order to  
achieve stability in the region" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 11/2)

"Chinese President: 'Land for Peace' is the main solution to  
problems in the region" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 11/2)

"Calls to change the Lebanese government and confront all attempts  
to create sedition continue. Lebanon denies Larsen's claims about  
weapons smuggling to Lebanon across borders with Syria. Israel: We  
will continue our violations of Lebanon's airspace; Let Lebanon and  
the UN keep protesting" (Government-owned Tishreen, 11/2)

"The Lebanese army denies smuggling of arms across Syrian borders.  
Al-Saniora and Salloukh: The Larsen report is untrue; we did not  
feed such information to Larsen" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 11/2)

"The Wall Street Journal: Americans are bitter about the war in  
Iraq. Opinion polls show that Democrats are approaching control of  
the Congress" (Government-owned Tishreen, 11/2)

"Intelligence report shows Iraq sinking in chaos. Killing of a US

solider and scores of Iraqis in Baghdad and Al-Anbar"

(Government-owned Tishreen, 11/2)

"A new Israeli massacre with a US green light: Ten Palestinians martyred, 50 injured, as a result of the Israeli aggression against Gaza. One Israeli solider killed, six settlers injured"

(Government-owned Al-Thawra, 11/2)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

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"Why Fabricate Allegations against Syria?"  
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Isam Dari, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, commented (11/2): "In a suspicious harmony between Roed-Larsen and John Bolton, both talked about continued smuggling of arms from Syria to Lebanon.... We wonder if Roed-Larsen received his information, which he attributed to the Lebanese Government, from the Lebanese prime minister personally or from one of the ministers who are known for their adoption of American and Israeli positions....

"Has this new dirty game been concocted by Roed-Larsen, Bolton, and some of those who carry Lebanese identity by name and American-French identity by word and deed? Why this new lie at this particular time? Is it to mar and abort Parliament Speaker Nabih Birri's call for consultations by showing Hizbollah as arming itself when the February 14 team is calling for disarming the party as a precondition to any successful dialogue, and rejecting in advance any government change or reshuffle to accurately reflect the political balance on the ground and the desire of the Lebanese people? Is the fabrication of this new lie at this particular time related to the midterm elections that will take place in the United States within days, with the aim of diverting the attention of the American public, which is complaining about the policies of the Bush administration, toward a foreign 'threat,' whether in Iraq, Afghanistan, or Lebanon, in an attempt to pull the rug from under the feet of the Democrats, who, according to American opinion polls,

will achieve a big election win? Why this return to the fabrication of lies against Syria? Is it because the international community and its big powers, like Russia and some European countries, have started talking about the crucial Syrian role in the peace process and about the need to revive this process...?

"Irrespective of the true objective of such leaks and false information and their sources, origins, and tools, and irrespective of the fact that Hizbollah stressed that it does not need weapons, perhaps for the next two years the Bush administration and those who benefit from it and implement its orders in the world and in Lebanon want to hide facts with lies and to change the course of history. Through what it did and is still doing, together with its partners, this administration proves that it is enemy number one for Syria, the Arabs, and other nations. But this is no longer useful: lies and masks have fallen forever."

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"A New Tune"  
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Ali Qasim, a columnist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (11/2):

"While Israeli planes were flying low over the Lebanese capital, Beirut, and the south, staging mock raids, Terje Roed-Larsen repeated his tune about the smuggling of weapons to Hizbollah....

"John Bolton, the US representative in the United Nations, did not let this opportunity pass. He immediately announced that he, too, has information about the smuggling of weapons. He said he obtained the information from parties in the Lebanese government, but added that the information is not detailed because the parties that gave it fear assassination. Condoleezza Rice, for her part, went further, saying she has information about a plan to assassinate Lebanese figures, including Al-Saniora.

"Since Rice has the information, why doesn't the US Administration reveal these plans? Or is it that no one else knows about these plans, and perhaps no one else is drawing up these plans other than this administration, in order to level new accusations against Syria, now that all previous accusations have reached a deadend and lost their credibility?

"This harmony shows the gravity of what is being prepared for the

region after the failure of Lebanese parties to implement what they were asked to implement. And it largely reflects a bankruptcy in the American agenda that relied on those parties. Consequently, those parties are now a burden to US policy itself, and there might be a need to get rid of them, and this is why the way is being paved with elaborate talk about and warning against the return of assassinations, especially in the identification of the targeted persons....

"It is no secret that such warnings might be a cover for alternative scenarios aimed at creating confusion inside Lebanon, and an attempt to save Al-Sani'ora's government and obstruct the consultation meetings for which Parliament Speaker Birri has called. While the nationalist Lebanese figures welcomed Birri's call, other parties are working hard to put spokes in the wheels and push things toward the unknown."

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"Will Spain Succeed in Convening a Middle East Peace Conference?"  
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Dr. Sa'id Musallam, a commentator in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (11/2): "The idea of a new international conference on peace in the Middle East enjoys the support of the EU, Russia, and China.... Although the United States played down the significance of the Spanish call for such a conference, some people believe that the US Administration, suffering under its many crises, might ultimately agree to the idea....

"Will the Spanish initiative succeed in creating a new international climate from which the countries of the region in general will benefit, or will the American intransigence and the major ambitions of the oil cartels in the United States, France, and other countries, in temporary alliances forged to serve personal interests, spoil the climate of diplomacy and escalate the tone of blackmail and arrogance up to the use of force, in which case no one will benefit?"  
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"Changing Policies, or Changing Tools?"  
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Khalid al-Ashhab, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, commented (11/2): "Would Democratic domination of the US Congress after the midterm elections next week mean a qualitative change in US foreign policy, preventing the Bush administration over the next two years from bringing the world, primarily Arabs, back to the state of coercion and anxiety that it has been experiencing for years? Is it just a change in tools and methods while policies remain the same...?"

"Arabs need to answer this question and then search for a salvation that is not linked to the fluctuating whims of American elections."  
Corbin